



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PSYCHIATRIC SECURITY REVIEW BOARD

Testimony of Ellen Weber Lachance, Executive Director Psychiatric Security Review Board Before the Appropriations Committee February 20, 2009

Good afternoon, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Ellen Weber Lachance, and I am the Executive Director of the Psychiatric Security Review Board (PSRB). I appear before you today to speak in support of H.B. 6365, Governor Rell's recommended budget.

The Psychiatric Security Review Board has jurisdiction over all persons found not guilty of a crime by reason of mental disease or defect. Individuals are committed to the Board by Superior Courts all across Connecticut. Over 90% of the crimes for which they are committed are violent offenses, with murder accounting for 30% of those felonies. The Board, in turn, orders their confinement to either the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services at Connecticut Valley Hospital or a facility determined by the Department of Developmental Services.

The PSRB is composed of six members, chosen for their expertise and appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Board members meet every two weeks throughout the year. Last year, the Board conducted 225 hearings and issued 188 Memoranda of Decision.

The Board's statutory mandate is the protection of society, and that goal is accomplished through Board-ordered treatment and placement of the individuals committed to its jurisdiction. I am pleased to report that over the last 14 years, since the Board has kept statistics regarding arrests, the Board has had a zero percent criminal recidivism rate for those individuals discharged from the hospital who reside in the community under Board-ordered supervision.

At the close of fiscal year 2008, there were 152 individuals under the Board's jurisdiction. Approximately 85% of them were placed in a confined setting, with some having community transition privileges. Fifteen percent of those individuals resided in the community full-time.

The Psychiatric Security Review Board is a small agency that has a significant role in safeguarding Connecticut citizens, while at the same time ensuring appropriate treatment services for those under its jurisdiction. The Governor's recommended budget provides the PSRB with the minimum resources necessary to carry out its public safety mandate. Favorable action by the Appropriations Committee on the Governor's recommended budget will ensure that the Board can continue to effectively monitor insanity acquittees in order to ensure public safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committee today. I would be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.

Telephone# (860) 566-1441 • Facsimile# (860) 566-1425

505 Hudson Street, First Floor • Hartford, Connecticut 06106-7107
website address: www.dmhas.state.ct.us/psrb

An Equal Opportunity Employer